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ER 10-2478

*war plans*

23 April 1958

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director (Intelligence)

SUBJECT : Special Reserve Panel Study

REFERENCE : Memorandum for SA/P/DCI from DD/I dated  
13 February 1958, same subject (ER 10-1063)

1. I have read the referenced study by the Special Reserve Panel with very real interest. It impresses me as a most thoughtful analysis of certain of the problems likely to be encountered by the Agency in a major war. I am afraid I cannot make any very useful comments but my quick reactions are set forth in the following paragraphs.

2. One reason this paper is interesting is because it is one of very few that have ever come to my attention in which an effort has been made to make a rough estimate of the probable character of a major war. To me, the estimate seems reasonable but inevitably it raises certain questions.

a. Does this estimate understate by implication the probable cataclysmic character of the opening stages of a future world war?

b. Does the Pentagon in its planning estimate or assume that the character of a major war will be as herein described?

c. Does the Pentagon have any thought through estimate of the character of a future major war? Or, is our military thinking based on the assumption that SAC (like the U. S. Cavalry in a "Western" film) will somehow win the war in a few days without major damage to the United States?

d. Do we not in any event require some agreed estimate of the character of a future war (either that contained in this paper or some other) as a basis for sensible war planning?

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3. The principal conclusion respecting war preparation that I would draw from this study is that we should spend a few million dollars on a vastly more sophisticated communications network than the Agency now possesses. If in a future war there are tactical and strategic "islands", including neutral areas in and from which the Agency will operate, the prime requisite for effectiveness will be communications.

4. I am in full agreement with paragraph 6. but, should not the study contemplate the possibility, as another major preparation for war, of preparing facilities which could become operational bases for the Agency in relatively untouched areas? I recognize the difficulty of any such type of preparation but if we take this estimate of the character of the next war seriously, some arm of the U. S. Government should be thinking about the support of operations under the very chaotic conditions likely to prevail.

5. I think the Director would be interested in this paper in its present form but, if he does not wish to read this full discussion at this time, it might be worthwhile to give him a very short question-raising memorandum. I would suggest that this might be focused on the questions in paragraph 2. above, that is, on the assumptions concerning the character of a future war that underlie our present war planning. I am not at all convinced that these assumptions would stand in the light of searching inquiries.

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Special Assistant to the Director  
for Planning and Development

Attachment:  
ER 10-1063

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